Murray State University
Institutional Plan for Adult Learners

Financial Aid for Adult Learners

Current Financial Aid for Adult Learners.

Adult Learners at Murray State are eligible for a number of grants, loans, and scholarships.   These include the following:

- Adult students are eligible for federal programs including the Pell Grant, Stafford Loan Program, Perkins Loan, and both federal and institutional student employment.
- Adult students are eligible for state grants including the College Access Grant and the Go Higher Grant.
- A number of institutional-based scholarships are available to adult students. These include scholarships funded by the University and some funded by endowments. The University awards a scholarship to all KCTCS transfers based on grade point average and number of hours earned. These scholarships are available to both full-time and part-time transfer students. An endowment has allowed the University to offer $50,000 a year in scholarships to students transferring from Madisonville Community College to the MSU Madisonville Campus. These are two-year scholarships available only to full-time students.   Numerous endowed scholarships based on field of study, the student's county of residence, or other similar criteria are available to adults based on competitive awards. Approximately 3 scholarships a year are awarded to adult students by Continuing Education. Students enrolling in the Bachelor of Integrated Studies Program (BIS) through Project Graduate receive a scholarship equal to half of residence tuition for BIS 399, Introduction to BIS.
- The University works very closely with the West Kentucky Workforce Investment Board, the Veterans Administration, and area employers to assist adult students to fund their education through tuition waiver programs and direct grant programs. For students receiving tuition reimbursement through their employer, the University waives payment of tuition until the student is reimbursed.

Goals for Modifying, Expanding, or Increasing Financial Aid for Adult Learners.

1. Work with our Office of Institutional Advancement to increase the amount of private dollars available for scholarships for adult students.
2. Continue to increase the amount of scholarship dollars devoted directly to adult students, both full-time and part-time.
3. Increase marketing and awareness initiatives to inform adult students of financial aid available to them.

Plans to Achieve Goals

Goal 1. Increase scholarships and other financial aid for adult students

   a. Work with our Office of Institutional Advancement to develop additional
       endowment programs similar to the Badgett Scholarship for Madisonville
       Campus students for our other regional campuses and on-campus adult
       students.
   b. Conduct phone-a-thons for graduates of our adult programs to support
       financial aid programs for adults returning to school.
   c. Partner with area business and industries on tuition assistance programs
       and their value to the employer and employee.

Goal 2. Increase institutional-based aid available to adult students

   a. Provide incentives to adults to return to school by offering adult students the
       opportunity to take the first course at no cost to the student.
   b. Develop a short-term loan fund for adult students.
   c. Continue to review the Transfer Scholarship and increase total dollar
       commitment as transfer enrollment increases and cost increases.

Goal 3. Increase marketing and awareness initiatives

   a. Conduct financial aid workshops at area community colleges and regional
       campuses to inform adult students about what financial aid is available to
       them.
   b. Develop a specific marketing brochure targeting financial aid opportunities
       for adult and extended campus students.
   c. Conduct "Adults Belong in College" workshops throughout the region to
       make adults more aware of the opportunities available to them.

Flexible Academic Programming

Current Flexible Academic Programming Available to Adults

   ● Bachelor of Integrated Studies (BIS) degree offered since 1987 and
      considered a model for other adult degree completion programs in the state.
   ● MSU offers degree programs totally through on-line instruction in these
      areas: Bachelor of Integrated Studies; Bachelor of Science in Business; and
      Bachelor of Telecommunications Systems Management.   These programs are
      offered in cooperation with KCTCS and assume that students have met lower
      division requirements prior to enrollment. Certificate endorsement
      programs are offered on-line in English as a Second Language (ESL) and
      Gifted and Talented Programs. The University also offers the Master of
      Business Administration program on-line.

- Through our regional campus sites, a number of bachelor and master degree programs are available through evening and week-end instruction with the bachelor degree programs being offered in partnership with the local community college. The primary programs are elementary education, business administration, social work, nursing (R.N to B.S.N) and the BIS. All of these programs are sequenced at each regional campus site and designed to be completed in approximately three years after completing associate level study.
- The University is experimenting with an accelerated program offered through the BIS with a field of study in organizational communications.   This program allows students to complete a degree in less than 18 months by attending class one night per week with instruction supplemented by on-line instruction. Classes meet for eight weeks each.   A cohort of 23 students just completed the program at Hopkinsville last December and a new class started in Paducah.
- At the graduate level, similar experiments are being conducted with a Professional MBA in Madisonville and a M.S. in Organizational Communications in Hopkinsville.   If successful, these programs will be rotated to other regional campus sites also.
- The University continues to expand the number of courses available on-line. During the 2008-09 academic year, the University offered a total of 296 courses on-line, up 17% from the previous year.

While these efforts have been extensive, it must be noted that students responding to the Adult Learner Inventory identified the lack of available coursework as a major barrier to enrollment and degree completion.

Goals for Modifying, Expanding, or Increasing Flexible Academic Programming Options for Adult Learners

1. Expand the number of programs and courses available on-line.
2. Expand the number of courses and programs offered through our regional campuses.
3. Expand the number of programs offered through flexible scheduling options.

Plans to Achieve Goals

Goal 1. Expand the number of programs and courses available on-line.

a. Identify programs in high demand for on-line delivery and work with the Provost, Deans, and Department Chairs to make these programs available.
b. Particular emphasis will be placed on adding upper-division courses to support the BIS and lower division courses to support the new University Studies program that goes into effect in Fall 2009.
c. Provide additional incentives through course development stipends, release time, and tenure/promotion credit for faculty who develop on-line courses in high demand areas.

d. Work with the Center for Teaching, Learning, and Technology to conduct training seminars on the use of Blackboard and to provide assistance with development of on-line courses.

Goal 2. Expand the number of programs and courses offered through our regional campuses

a. Work with local communities to identify specific programmatic needs and work through the University leadership to identify resources needed to deliver these programs and courses.
b. Work with academic administrators to sequence degree programs offered at extended campus sites so that potential students can see how they can complete their degree in a timely manner.

Goal 3. Expand the number of programs offered through flexible scheduling options

a. Utilizing the experimental model already in place, increase the number of cohort programs available in accelerated formats to all regional campuses.
b. Work with University leadership to identify the resources needed to increase the number of programs available through flexible formats.
c. Develop a marketing plan to create awareness of these new options.

Credit for Prior Learning

Current Credit for Prior Learning Policy

- For adult students, Murray State University currently accepts credit earned through the College Level Examination Program (CLEP, departmental challenge exams, and military training validated by the American Council on Education.
- Two degree programs, the BIS and the Vocational Technical Education Program, utilize portfolios for students to demonstrate competency in specific courses and grant credit as appropriate.

Goals for modifying, expanding, or increasing credit for prior learning options for adult learners.

1. Implement ACE National Guide for College Credit for Workforce Training as an acceptable method to receive college credit.
2. Expand the Prior Learning Assessment portfolio system to additional degree programs.
3. Establish through the Office of Academic Affairs, an awareness system of the validity and reliability of Prior Learning Assessment as a legitimate tool for awarding college credit.

Plans to Achieve Goals

Goal 1. Implement ACE National Guide for College Credit for Workforce Training as an acceptable method to receive college credit.

a. Work with the Provost Office and the Office of the Registrar to develop guidelines for implementation of the ACE National Guide for College Credit for Workforce Training.
b. Develop marketing materials directed to adult students on how to seek credit for their workforce training.
c. Work with the Registrar's Office to develop policies and procedures for awarding and transcripting credit earned through prior learning.

Goal 2. Expand the Prior Learning Assessment portfolio system to additional degree programs.

a. Through the Provost Office, create an ad hoc committee of faculty and administrators to review PLA and make recommendations for adoption.
b. Create a pool of travel funds to send interested faculty to conferences and workshops on prior learning assessment.
c. Work with the Center for Teaching, Learning, and Technology to develop workshops for faculty on how to assess prior learning.

Goal 3. Establish through the Office of Academic Affairs, an awareness system of the validity and reliability of Prior Learning Assessment as a legitimate tool for awarding college credit.

a. Utilize CAEL consultant services which will be available on our campus in the fall to promote prior learning assessment.
b. Identify peer institutions who utilize prior learning assessment effectively and send teams of faculty to review and assess how it has worked on their campus.

Campus Climate

Current Campus Climate Related to Adult Learners

As it relates to serving adult students, Murray State University can best be described as having two separate campuses. While unable to specifically identify and isolate responses from students, it is apparent that the regional campus program is designed to serve adult students while the Murray campus programs and services are much more geared toward serving traditional students. However, because many services that impact all students originate from the main campus, regional campus students are impacted by those services also.

Student services on the main campus are primarily an 8-4:30, Monday through Friday operation. The use of technology does allow students to access some services during other hours but face-to-face contact usually must occur during those hours. Regional campuses maintain both evening and weekend hours and are much more geared to be one-stop service centers for adults.

The ALI and ALFI identified several areas where improvement needs to occur, including flexible scheduling, academic advising, availability of sufficient

coursework, and availability of information regarding financial aid and payment options. It is also apparent that not all departments on campus focus on the needs of adult students nor are adult students considered a high priority by many departments.

Goals for Changing Your Campus Climate to Better Meet the Needs of Adult Learners

1. Increase understanding and skills among academic and administrative departments of the unique needs of adult learners.
2. Increase awareness to adult learners as to how to access various student services on campus either through face-to-face contact or technology.

Plans to Achieve Goals

Goal 1. Increase understanding and skills among academic and administrative departments of the unique needs of adult learners.

a. Work with the Center for Teaching, Learning, and Technology to create a series of workshops for faculty and staff on the unique needs and issues facing adult learners.
b. Work through the President's Cabinet, the Administrative Council, and the Dean's Council to promote the needs of adult learners.

Goal 2. Increase awareness to adult learners of the various student services available to them on campus either through face-to-face contact or technology.

Schedule regular visits by various student services offices to regional campuses and promote the availability of these services to students at those sites.

Utilize technology including Banner, ITV, and the Internet to link adult learners to various student services assistance.

Create virtual student services hours for those students unable to access offices and services on the main campus during regular business hours.

Develop digital signage at the regional campuses and in locations on the main campus informing adult students of items of interest, deadlines, etc.

Other Issues Related to Adult Students

Other Opportunities or Needs identified

Two other opportunities identified by Murray State that we will focus on are easing transfer from KCTCS institutions to Murray State and an increase emphasis on the Project Graduate initiative. Both of these initiatives are critical to increasing the number of adult learners at our institution.

Goals for Addressing Opportunities or Needs

1. Work with the University administration and faculty to ease the transition of KCTCS students to Murray State.
2. Increase the number of student's re-entering MSU through the Project Graduate initiative.

Plans to Achieve Goals

Goal 1. Work with the University administration and faculty to ease the transition of KCTCS students to Murray State.

a. Increase the number and dollar amount of scholarships available to students transferring from KCTCS to MSU.
b. Ease the transfer admissions and credit evaluation process by moving those areas into a one-stop Transfer Center.
c. Develop a Transfer Guide for every degree program at Murray State showing what should be taken during the first two years at a KCTCS institution and what must be taken at MSU to complete a specific degree program.
d. Conduct on-site admission and transcript evaluations at all community colleges in our region.
a. Goal 2. Increase the number of students re-entering MSU through the Project Graduate initiative.
b. Increase the amount of staff time devoted to the Project Graduate initiative.
c. Expand the Project Graduate initiate by reducing the number of hours and the grade point average for eligibility into the program.